

Claims

What is claimed is:

1. A method of automatically manufacturing a computer comprising the steps of:
- receiving an order from a customer;
  - assembling together a selection of hardware components specified by the order; and
  - loading onto the computer a software package specified by the order, including the steps of:
    - providing an Internet-accessible page for the customer to specify any software modifications required;
    - recording those modifications as an auto-configuration file; and
    - for each modification in the auto-configuration file, determining the configuration data corresponding thereto and entering that configuration data into the computer as the software package is being loaded.
2. The method according to claim 1 including the step of verifying the modifications against the order details.
3. The method according to claim 1 including the step of verifying the modifications against the current capabilities of the manufacturer.
4. The method according to claim 1 wherein the modifications are logged as they are made.

1 5. The method according to claim 3 wherein the modifications are logged as they  
2 are made.

1 6. Apparatus for automatically manufacturing a computer, comprising:  
2 an order unit for receiving an order from a customer;  
3 an assembly unit for assembling together a selection of hardware  
4 components specified by the order; and  
5 for loading onto the computer, a software package specified by the order  
6 including:

7 an Internet-accessible page onto which the customer can specify  
8 any software modifications required;

9 a modification unit for recording those modifications as an auto-  
10 configuration file; and

11 for each modification in the auto-configuration file, a control unit  
12 for determining the configuration data corresponding thereto and  
13 entering that configuration data into the computer as the software  
14 packages is being loaded.

1 7. The apparatus according to claim 6, including means for verifying the  
2 modifications against the order details.

1 8. The apparatus according to claim 6 including means for verifying the  
2 modifications against the current capabilities of the manufacturer.

1 9. The apparatus according to claim 6 including means for logging the  
2 modifications as they are made.

1 10. The apparatus according to claim 8 including means for logging the  
2 modifications as they are made.

1 11. An automated computer manufacturing method comprising the steps of:  
2 receiving an order from a customer;  
3 downloading the order to a manufacturing unit;  
4 including an auto-configuration indicator in the order for a special  
5 configuration requirement;  
6 generating a flag to look for the special configuration requirement;  
7 making an inquiry to a manufacturing database for the special  
8 configuration requirement; and  
9 if located, applying the special configuration requirement to the order.

1 12. The method according to claim 11 including the step of generating an order  
2 reference number.

1 13. The method according to claim 12 including the step of accepting the order.

1 14. The method according to claim 12 including the step of processing the special  
2 configuration requirement in parallel with a standard configuration  
3 requirement.

1 15. The method according to claim 12 including the step of logging the special  
2 configuration requirement into a manufacturing log.

1 16. The method according to claim 15 including the step of shipping the order to the  
2 customer.

- 1 17. The method according to claim 11 including the steps of:  
2 assembling together a selection of hardware components specified by the  
3 order;  
4 loading into the computer a software package specified by the order,  
5 including the steps of:  
6 providing an Internet-accessible page for the customer to specify any  
7 software modifications required;  
8 recording those modifications as an auto-configuration file; and  
9 for each modification in the auto-configuration file, determining the  
10 configuration requirement corresponding thereto and entering  
11 configuration requirement data into the computer as the software package  
12 is being loaded.
- 1 18. The method according to claim 17 including the step of verifying each  
2 modification against the order.
- 1 19. The method according to claim 17 including the step of verifying each  
2 modification against current manufacturing capabilities.
- 1 20. The method according to claim 17 wherein each of the modifications is logged.